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ABSTRACT

In recent years there have been an extraordinary number of proposals for comprehensive and intensive changes in school structure, finance, and administration, one indication that this is a time of unprecedent change for schools. One of the forces driving this intense focus on school change is the growing national concern about youth issues and problems. This paper notes the myriad of add-on programs that compete for space in the school day and takes the position that, rather than being seen as merely additive, education and services should be viewed as interactive, and essential to the formation of new effective strategies for educational success. The paper contends that if the additive view remains the sole model of school-community collaboration, it will be detrimental to school reform. Rather, there must be collaboration to broaden the knowledge base and schools must seek partners to build a broader vision of what education should be and can accomplish. The paper examines what needs to change, arguing that what is needed is a shift to thinking that supporting youth development is the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems and the achievement of educational goals. It proposes a definition of youth development, considers expanding definitions of positive youth outcomes, and focuses on two components of youth development--competencies and needs--and their interrelationship. The document concludes that the broader goals and strategies of youth development must become central to the educational mission. (NB)

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CENTER FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY RESEARCH

ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF EDUCATION

The Implications of a Youth Development Approach to Education Policies, Structures and Collaborations

Karen J. Pittman
Michele Cahill

Commissioned Paper #6
July 1992

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PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF EDUCATION:

The Implications of a Youth Development Approach to Education Policies, Structures and Collaborations

by
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for
The Council of Chief State School Officers

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This paper was first presented as a speech at the 1992 Summer Institute of the Chief State School Officers in July, 1992. Both the speech and the paper were commissioned by the Chief State School Officers as part of a series of papers on collaborations to improve students success. The ongoing conceptual work on this paper is based has been generously supported by the Ford Foundation and the Lilly Endowment.

The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research

The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research was established in 1990 at the Academy for Educational Development in response to growing concern about youth problems. Like many organizations, CYD is dedicated to contributing to better futures for disadvantaged children and youth in the United States. CYD works vigorously to capitalize on both the growing concern about youth problems and growing willingness to search for new solutions. Our goal: to transform concern about *youth problems* into public and private commitment to *youth development*.

Every institution that touches young people's lives should be held accountable for providing, to the greatest extent possible, opportunities to meet needs and build competencies. Institutions do not have to be comprehensive service providers. They should, however, all work toward their mandates in a way that they can ensure, at an absolute minimum, that they are doing no harm.

CYD sees its roles as strengthening national, state, local, and community leaders' -- both public and private -- capacity to craft public and private policies, programs and practice standards that are supportive of the country's young people. CYD provides these leaders with a sound conceptual framework for understanding what youth need to develop and an array of practical tools and strategies for facilitating assessment and change.

To accomplish these objectives, the Center provides services which include: conducting and synthesizing youth research and policy analyses; disseminating information about exemplary youth programs and policies and establishing collaborative efforts with these groups; designing and implementing program evaluations, community assessments, and special projects; and providing technical assistance to national organizations, state and local governments, and public and private institutions interested in improving their youth development efforts.

The Academy for Educational Development is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing human development needs throughout the world. Since its founding in 1961, AED has conducted projects throughout the United States and in more than 100 countries in the developing world.

Pushing the Boundaries of Education:
The Implications of a Youth Development
Approach to Education Policies,
Structures and Collaborations

In the past five years there have been more proposals for comprehensive and intensive changes in school structure, school finance, and school administration than have been produced in any similar time period in our lifetimes. These proposals have come from sources within and outside of the education community. In several states, spurred by advocates, the courts have examined the record of entire school systems, found them lacking, and ordered restructuring under state law. Other critics of public schools have gone so far as to propose privatization as the means to increasing student achievement. At the same time, many schools and schools systems have engaged in self-directed efforts to make significant changes toward the goal of improving student achievement: restructuring middle grades education, creating site-based management, involving parents in new roles in school governance, eliminating tracking and reshaping classroom instruction. Many others are struggling with contending explanations of school failure and strategies for reform. It is clear that this is a time of unprecedented change for schools.

One of the forces driving this intense focus on school change has been a growing, national concern about youth issues and problems. Demographic changes in the population have made urgent the fact that too many young people are not making a successful transition to adulthood. Too many youth lack the critical skills needed for economic success. Too many lack the connections to family, school, community, and society that are the ingredients of citizen participation. Too many engage in behaviors that slow their progress, if not risk their lives.

This broad attention to youth issues is long overdue. It has come with a price, however. Too many of the discussions and recommendations on youth issues are problem-focused and fragmented. Too many of the recommendations focus on fixing young people -- reducing their problem behaviors -- rather than on fundamental changes in the systems that engage and respond to young people. Too many of the strategies that have been generated over the past decades have come in the form of narrowly targeted and limited programs -- structured, time-limited

interventions aimed at addressing a particular problem such as AIDS or substance abuse. This orientation has had a profound effect on schools.

School, as the central institution that reaches all young adolescents and the majority of older adolescents, has been the preferred locus for many of these targeted interventions. This attention has generated some very positive results. School-based or school-linked health clinics are one of the most visible products of the efforts to use schools as a base for expanded services. But the demand for such expansions has also raised serious questions about the role of schools in addressing youth problems.

The myriad of add-on programs that compete for space in the school day, the school building, and the school budget have led to the now common cry that schools cannot do it all. More specifically, they have raised the question of whether calls for schools to increase academic achievement and the calls for schools to address youth problems can both be answered. This is primarily a strategic question. There is fairly broad agreement that the problems youth face -- poor health status, family crises, substance abuse, violence, AIDS, pregnancy -- have to be addressed. There is broad agreement that these problems severely limit the likelihood that academic instruction will be effective. Most acknowledge that schools, because they stand as the only point of universal access to students, must logically play some role. But, based on conversations with school administrators and teachers across the country, we conclude that most also see this as a series of trade-offs, as a balancing act in which schools, having been asked to address two competing demands, must find suitable compromises.

The premise of this paper is that this view of collaborations is fundamentally flawed in its assumption that education and services are additive. We contend, instead, that they are interactive, and essential to the formulation of new effective strategies for educational success. We believe that if the additive view remains the sole model of school/community collaboration, in fact, it will be detrimental to school reform. This approach will replicate a central flaw in much educational practice of compartmentalizing knowledge instead of developing a student-centered, pro-active, and holistic approach to education and youth development. Rethinking the goals, methods and content of collaborations can be an important tool in an education reform strategy.

Schools, thus far, have engaged in collaboration to broaden the service base to meet student needs that are now recognized as a prerequisite for achievement. We argue that there must also be collaboration to broaden the knowledge base. Schools must actively seek partners to build a broader vision of what education should be and can accomplish. Schools must actively seek partners to devise strategies, train staff, and develop opportunities for students. Schools must actively seek partners in creating environments, both inside school walls and out, that foster learning, growth and engagement. Schools, most importantly, must seek partners in developing a broader base of outcomes against which they hold themselves and the other institutions that touch youth accountable. State policy makers can and must play a critical role in providing leadership, incentives, and standards for the development of this new system of accountability.

What Needs to Change

The foundation of most cross-sector collaborations involving schools is flawed by a linear, fix-then-teach philosophy. Students (and often their families) must be fixed or made ready (fed, clothed, emotionally fortified, supervised, mentored, housed) so that learning can proceed. This fix-then-teach thinking is not found only in schools, but is a variation of the fix-then-develop philosophy that undergirds this country's entire approach to youth services. Thus, collaborations between schools and social services or health have often shared a common orientation focused on student and family deficits. American social policy for youth is built on the belief that, with the exception of education, public expenditures for youth should be limited to addressing problems. This view rests on the assumption that positive youth development occurs naturally in families and communities in the absence of youth problems. Such thinking has created an assortment of youth services focused on "fixing" adolescents engaged in risky behaviors or preventing "at risk" youth from engaging in such behaviors.

A major problem of this thinking is that it focuses services on the goal of "problem free" adolescents rather than on "fully prepared" adolescents. This orientation to a goal defined by the absence of a negative behavior is problematic for two reasons. First, quite simply, problem prevention is not the same as preparation for the future; second, much research indicates that problem reduction is interactive with development of competence. A related problem is that it

fosters passivity. It assumes that families and schools, without increased support, can provide the support naturally to adolescents to understand life's challenges and responsibilities, and opportunities to develop the necessary skills and confidence to succeed and contribute as youth and as adults.

This analysis points to the need for a basic conceptual shift --- from thinking that youth problems are merely the principal barrier to positive youth development to thinking that supporting youth development is the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems. Pittman developed this argument in testimony delivered before the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families in 1992. This paper extends the argument to suggest that **what is needed is a shift to thinking that supporting youth development is the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems and the achievement of educational goals.**

The tension now felt between the goal of problem prevention and that of academic preparation is unnecessary. These two streams of action are not in opposition. Rather promoting youth development is a central element in an educational reform strategy. Much of what is at the heart of the changes being enacted as a part of the school reform movement addresses the concern that schools must be more responsive, more participatory, more relevant institutions; that they must, in order to be effective agents for academic learning, be transformed into environments that are more conducive to students' overall development.

Similarly, youth development is the core strategy of effective problem prevention. The most common themes addressed in problem-prevention curricula and programs are personal and social skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills, relationship building, and opportunities for contribution and participation. Yet, these are not brought together into any coherent approach. Rather, prevention courses generally exist in isolation, attempting to build these competencies within a narrowly focused courses. To change this we need both a common understanding of the meaning of youth development and an application of this conceptual framework in an assessment of education and problem-prevention activities.

A first step, urgently needed, is development of a common lens through which to view the often parallel activities and collaborations going on in or with schools in the names of education and problem-prevention. To do so will require completion of three tasks:

1. Development of a clear definition of youth development (what the outcomes are that adult society wants, what the outcomes are that youth want, what the processes are for achieving those outcomes);

2. Development of a better understanding of how competencies are built and how they interact;

3. Development of a better understanding of the range of actors/institutions that can or should play key roles in youth development and of how these roles inter-relate.

Toward a Definition of Youth Development

Turning Points, the 1989 report on preparing youth for the 21st century prepared by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, begins with a wonderful list of goals for 15 year olds. The list goes beyond academic competence, to suggest that we want every young adolescent to be:

- an intellectually reflective person
- a person en route to a lifetime of meaningful work
- a good citizen
- a caring and ethical individual; and
- a healthy person.

While this list is more eloquent than many, an extensive review of the goals spelled out in the policy literature, the programmatic literature, and the academic literature on adolescent development completed for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (Pittman,1991) indicated that the broad themes articulated in Turning Points were surprisingly consistent. Throughout the various literatures, a major common theme was the importance of competence. Adults, whether policymakers, professionals or parents, want young people to develop a set of competencies that ensure their progress in adolescence and equip them for the challenges of adulthood.

Academic competence (knowledge, problem-solving skills, an appreciation for lifelong learning, etc.) and vocational competence stand out in most lists. But listed consistently are also concerns about health behaviors and knowledge, personal and social skills, ethics and citizenship. Again, sometimes competencies were articulated in the type of positive language

just used, sometimes they were referred to indirectly through the problems that signify their absence. Policy reports, for example, routinely call for reductions in dropout rates, youth unemployment rates, adolescent pregnancy, suicide and substance abuse, violence reduction, anti-social values, gang and delinquency prevention.

But there was a second, equally important theme. Strongly articulated in the academic literature on adolescent development and alluded to in almost every policy report was the fact that the development of competencies hinges upon the adequate fulfillment of adolescents' basic needs. The need for safety, structure, membership, strong personal relationships, opportunities to contribute and develop a sense of self-worth, independence and control over important decisions, and mastery. These needs are essentially the stages of Maslow's needs hierarchy. When met, they are the raw materials that build confidence, connectedness, and commitment.

Gaining an understanding of how these needs and competencies interact during adolescence is a central task for youth development and education reform. Yet, current policy and practice ignore this interaction and often, deny needs and fragment competency acquisition. The issue, the critical issue for all who say we are committed to the healthy development of youth, is that we are not, through out policies or through the assessment of our practices, putting what we know into action. We are not holding ourselves accountable. The outcomes that we track, measure, and reward in youth and in the organizations and programs that work with youth are too narrow. Our premise is that by focusing on single outcomes such as academic competence, and dismissing the value of the non-credentialed competencies, we lose the essential insights of how competencies interact to result in positive outcomes.

Expanding Definitions of Positive Youth Outcomes

There is enormous energy poured into the measurement and tracking of academic competence. Whether by stamina (years of schooling), progress (percent in correct grade, percent performing at grade level) , or achievement (percent mastering certain knowledge and skill bases), there is an industry devoted to measuring academic competence. There are intensifying debates over how it should be defined, when and how it should be assessed, what

should be considered the core academic competency areas, whether there should be standards. Similarly, there is an industry devoted to thinking about how academic competence is best nurtured and developed -- to the pedagogy of instruction.

There is also a newer, but growing interest in defining, tracking, measuring and understanding how to build vocational competence (e.g., the SCANS Report). Certainly, however, there is a deeply held belief that vocational competence is a necessary component of adulthood. With the challenge of structural unemployment facing the country, the links between vocational competence and academic competence are now being explored with more earnestness. However, for the most part, youth unemployment is still addressed as a training issue, rather than one of broad competency development.

Beyond academic and vocational competence, however -- beyond what we have begun calling the "credentialed competencies" -- there is no broad commitment to the development of positive outcomes. There may at best be broad commitment to the prevention or amelioration of negative outcomes. If we think of a numberline, then there is growing agreement that it is in the country's interest to try to ensure that most young people are not in the red on these competencies (i.e., not grossly incompetent), but there is little interest in or even understanding of the need to get them fully in the black.

There is talk about health promotion and wellness, but the country is still very much in a problem prevention/treatment mode. School-based or school-linked clinics or adolescent wellness centers serve only a tiny fraction of the country's young people. On the other hand, AIDS prevention, pregnancy prevention, substance abuse prevention programs exist in most school districts. While these efforts are often important supports for students, they are most often delivered without context. We must recognize that ubiquitous substance abuse prevention curricula are not enough.

There is talk about personal and social skill building, but there is not systematic attention paid to providing these experiences and services to young people until after they demonstrate that they lack these skills. Yet social skill-building is integrally related to learning and the cognitive capacity for decision-making. Programs like Teen Choice in New York City, that engage young people through group counseling and have follow-up individual counseling available for those who need it, are far rarer in schools.

The development of these non-credentialed competencies is the mission and charge of many youth-serving organizations, both the traditional national organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs and the many independent, local organizations. As a group these organizations tend to offer a much wider array of programs and supports than schools, place a higher value on youth participation, and rely heavily on non-formal educational methods. The programs and activities span a wide range of competency areas and may include activities such as sports and recreation programs, life skills courses, community service, homework monitoring, problem prevention, and experiential science and math education. Common practices and strategies used in delivering these services reflect an understanding of the importance of meeting young people's basic physical and social needs. These include: use of small groups, flexible grouping practices, symbols of membership (e.g. uniforms, tee shirts), and clear structures (regular meetings, codes of conduct) that recognize the importance of structure, belonging, and group membership to adolescents. Also important is the emphasis on providing each adolescent with manageable challenges that encourage and reward progress and develop a personal sense of achievement, and thus, broaden the opportunities for success. But these organizations struggle continuously against marginality, contending daily with unstable and insufficient funding. There are no public resources invested in making sure that these programs are available in every community and accessible to every young person. In a public policy climate in which there is not even a strong commitment to providing counseling, decision-making skills, interpersonal skill-building, conflict and stress management after problems like truancy have surfaced, the organizations that promote growth and development along the social competencies are disrespected and discounted.

Changing this climate requires strategies that broaden understanding of the relationship of social connectedness and social skills to productive adulthood. One area of progress in this arena is the growing acknowledgement of the importance of providing opportunities for young people to build their citizenship skills by reconnecting to community and the service ethic. The community service movement, linking schools and students with community-based organizations that offer them opportunities to contribute, is important for its own contributions to youth development and for the insights it may provide into the nature of interacting competencies. The linking of service activity with reflection in "service learning" approaches is a prime example of a school/community collaboration experience that is not additive, but integrative. The

building of the social and citizenship competency through service is joined with the building of cognitive skills. There are growing examples of this approach throughout the country according to the National Center for Service Learning in Early Adolescence, and some school improvement programs that began with other core strategies have incorporated this approach. For example, the Center for Collaborative Education, the New York City affiliate of the Coalition of Essential Schools, includes among its principles for student centered schools "the student as worker and student as citizen."

Service learning is a hopeful development in education/community strategies. It stands in sharp contrast, however, to most current organization and practice that remain in the problem-oriented mode. And if the non-credentialed competencies are only addressed in the problem-prevention mode, young people's basic needs -- safety, structure, relationships, membership, contribution, mastery, self-awareness -- are really not addressed at all. Recent public interest in mentoring programs is encouraging but very far from sufficient, and the proliferation of self esteem curricula are a disservice to the solid research base on the concept. Instead, we need a conceptual and value shift in America to a commitment to achieving positive outcomes across multiple dimensions for all young people. At present we do not even have a language in which to discuss positive outcomes. We certainly have no ready capacity to track and measure them. Fundamentally, we have no commitment to hold the organizations that touch youths' lives, in particular those that are imbedded in youths' lives, accountable.

Every institution that touches young people's lives should be held accountable for providing, to the greatest extent possible, opportunities to meet the needs that are the prerequisites of competence development, and to build the full set of competencies. Institutions do not have to be (and should, in most cases, not try to be) comprehensive service providers. They should, however, all take a common, comprehensive, and positive approach to working with young people who come in their doors. At an absolute minimum, institutions should do no harm.

Defining positive youth outcomes -- making explicit the goals and progress markers that adult society has for youth, squaring these with the goals and markers that young people have for themselves -- is a critical first step towards being able to enforce this "no harm" role. But it is only a first step. The real challenge is not in creating the lists, but in defining the

relationship between these lists and the mandates, missions, programs and practices of the institutions and organizations that serve youth -- schools, health clinics, parks and recreation departments, social service agencies, employment and training programs. It takes clear delineations of both expectations and responsibilities on both sides to create a social contract. A new social contract is very much what is needed today between adults and youth.

The lists of positive goals for youth now stand as rhetorical guideposts rather than anchors of accountability. Many institutions allude to them vaguely in their mission statements, but few account for them in their bottom lines. Few schools, for example, would say that they were not in the youth development business. Most have an array of programs and partnerships that suggest that they are attending to the full set of needs and competencies of their students. But few can produce any type of plan that suggests how the school organization, instructional practices and community partnerships contribute to the overall development. Schools need to question how what goes on in the classroom contributes not just to academic achievement, but to overall development. Few can produce data, even qualitative, that suggests that students are gaining in all areas. Most importantly, few institutions can claim with much confidence, that they are doing no harm. Schools are not alone in being unable to fully address their mission statements. Rather, this critique can be applied at an aggravate level about every major public institution in this country that has a mandate to work with youth.

Why is this broader framework for thinking about youth development and defining the critical positive youth outcomes important? Because, even in this rough form, it challenges the ways in which society distributes resources, structures supports, and assesses success with young people. If the five broad competency areas and seven prerequisite needs (see Figure 1)outlined above are to be addressed holistically, then we have to be concerned about four facts:

1. that public expenditures are generally limited to academic training and vocational placement, and the prevention, treatment or control of problem behaviors by youth

2. that a disproportionate share of current resources and attention is focused on the above to the exclusion of other needs and competencies

3. that the organizations and institutions that have, as their major mission and function, assisting families with the socialization and development of children and youth are severely underfunded and undervalued. These institutions are the civic, religious, recreational, informal education, and community-based service organizations that are found primarily, but not exclusively, in the not-for-profit sector. (Parks and recreation departments and libraries, for example, are most often, public.)

4. that supports are compartmentalized and institutions take a narrow view of outcomes and their responsibility for young peoples' overall development.

Figure 1. THE TWO COMPONENTS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

COMPETENCIES

The five basic competency areas which define the range of behaviors and skills needed for adult success are:

health/physical competence: good current health status plus evidence of appropriate knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that will ensure future health (e.g. exercise, good diet/nutrition, effective contraceptive practices)

personal/social competence: intrapersonal skills (ability to understand personal emotions, have self-discipline); interpersonal skills (ability to work with others, develop friendships and relationships through communication, cooperation, empathizing, negotiating); coping/system skills ability to adapt, be flexible, assume responsibility); judgement skills (ability to plan, evaluate, make decisions, solve problems)

cognitive/creative competence: broad base of knowledge, ability to appreciate and participate in areas of creative expression; good oral, written language skills, problem-solving and analytical skills, ability to learn/interest in learning and achieving

vocational competence: broad understanding/awareness of vocational (and avocational) options and of steps needed to act on choices; adequate preparation for chosen career, understanding of value and function of work (and leisure)

citizenship (ethics and participation): understanding the history and values of one's nation and community and the desire to be involved in efforts that contribute to the nation and community.

NEEDS

There are seven basic human needs that are fundamental for survival and healthy development:

a sense of safety and structure;
a sense of belonging/group membership;
a sense of self-worth/contributing;
a sense of independence/control over one's life;
a sense of closeness/relationships;
a sense of competence/mastery;
a sense of self-awareness.

The fact that no one -- no profession, no organization, no institution, planning body, advocacy organization -- is willing to or required to situate their responsibility for their primary mission in a responsibility for overall youth development is a critical problem. Someone must take the lead in negotiating common terms of accountability across systems, developing workable systems of collaboration. Until these tasks are addressed, reforms and strategies -- even system-wide reforms -- are likely to be piecemeal, problem-focused, and limited in their overall impact.

Why hasn't the problem been addressed? On the simplest, most practical level, there is a lack of a common language across professions. We lack specific enough language and descriptors about the types of youth outcomes -- both competencies and connections that allow for the meeting of needs. The professions definitely need a working translation dictionary that identifies and relates the terms used in one profession or system to those used in another.

But the real problem is that there is insufficient understanding of or belief in the importance of the connections between the pieces just outlined. There is little understanding that competencies are inter-related and that needs and competencies interact. The adult outcome the country cares most about is economic self-sufficiency. Education is highly valued because it is seen as the best route to self-sufficiency. Maintenance institutions (e.g. health care, social services) and problem-prevention and intervention strategies are tolerated and supported because they are seen as necessary measures to try to keep youth (or their families) on track or get them back on track to complete schooling and find employment and because, in the case of early parenthood, for example, they can have a direct impact on the level of income and resources required for economic self-sufficiency.

Youth development supports and programs, in schools or out, are seen as beneficial but not critical because they do none of the above. They are too far removed from the goals and problems that currently define the country's interest in youth issues and from the accountability systems that drive the major institutions that serve youth. The dilemma is that there is a wealth of practical, empirical, and theoretical knowledge that suggests that these broader goals, and the policies, principles, and practices that support them, should be central to the economic self-sufficiency equation, not peripheral to it.

There is a need for the development and synthesis of a research base and a cogent research argument that elevates the importance of the non-credentialed competencies and the need-fulfilling connections and connects it to what institutions do and what the public now views as important. At the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research at AED we have started to do this work and to track the work being done by others. Some of this is summarized below. Before considering it, however, it is important to note that research evidence is half of the strategy. There is an equally important need for institutional policies that legitimize this broader vision. Much good, integrative practice is going on that is unlabelled, and therefore unnoticed and unsupported. Momentum can be built simply by providing leadership, incentives, standards and a clear call for assessment, innovation, and collaboration in the development of new ways of thinking and delivering services.

The Evidence that Competencies and Needs Interrelate

Dryfoos and others have demonstrated that problems covary (i.e., the teen who is truant is also at highest risk of early pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency). The flip side of this is also true -- developmental psychologists (Coleman; Connell; Csikszentmihalyi) have shown how competencies covary, that young people's cognitive growth is affected by the availability of choice and decision-making opportunities and the capacity to form relationships. In concrete terms, many teachers and youth workers have observed that the teen who is doing well in school, is also the one who is involved in the community, has good social skills, good work skills.

This covariance has clear implications for schools. It reinforces the frequent observation that extracurricular activities such as sports or music are effective "hooks" that keep students in school, and it suggests that sustaining engagement in learning may be improved by simultaneous experiences in engagement across more than one competency.

There is empirical evidence that we need to deal with young people holistically, but it is spread across a variety of fields. It has many implications for practice and policies. Briefly much of what is found in literature on adolescent development and youth programs is reflected in the literature on teaching, learning, achievement and school reform.

An obvious first example is the research on cooperative learning by Robert Slavin (1990). An essential insight here is that the use and strengthening of social skills can positively impact on cognitive development and knowledge acquisition. Joyce Epstein's work on improving achievement through changing the expectations and environment of the classroom, for example, is strongly supportive of this assertion as is the work on active learning. Epstein introduces the idea of TARGET structures --- tasks, authority, rewards, grouping, evaluations, and time. She argues that the content, difficulty, interdependence and sequence of tasks can be varied to make learning enjoyable; that students should participate in planning and decision-making; that more and varied system of rewards should be developed so that student progress is adequately recognized and student enthusiasm encouraged rather than drained; that students should be grouped flexibly and heterogeneously; that standards for evaluation are set that give students insight into their own effort and abilities; and, that connections be made between time and task.

Joan Lipsitz, in the now classic, **Growing Up Forgotten**, eloquently outlines the disparity between the research on early adolescents and the programs designed for them and translates this into clear recommendations for addressing the interactive relationship between supportive school environments and academic excellence.

In seeking comparisons, Harold Stephenson examines Japanese schools for clues to their achievement successes. In addition to many observations on the use of active learning methods, he observes that what in the United States are considered "extracurricular" additions are central to Japanese schools. Participation in cultural arts and recreation is considered an essential part of education.

A second line of argument is rooted in the evidence that competencies cannot be acquired without context. Research on cognitive development has demonstrated the importance of context to learning (Resnick, Lave) and ethnographic studies of community youth programs (Heath, McLaughlin) have identified the critical relationship between context, culture and motivation to learn. (Sticht, Berryman). A broad collaboration of shared knowledge and shared programmatic approaches is needed among schools and community agencies to provide opportunities for this context supportive to learning to occur.

Some of the strongest evidence of the importance of addressing needs and building the non-credentialed competencies is found in the analysis of the numerous prevention programs that have developed and been housed in schools. In *Adolescents at Risk*, Joy Dryfoos reviews over 100 programs, the bulk of which are school-based, which have some evidence that they are effective in the prevention of pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency, or school failure/school leaving. What is very interesting, as you read through the programs discussed, is how much these programs focus on meeting needs -- on building connections, confidence, commitment through membership, relationships, opportunities for contribution and participation -- and on building the "non-credentialed" competencies -- good health behavior, personal and social skills, citizenship skills.

For example, the Association of Junior Leagues' Teen Outreach Program, now replicated in schools across the country, was established to address the problems of early pregnancy and school failure. The program is one of the few in the country that has solid evaluation data showing, its direct contributions are reductions in early parenthood, improvements in academic achievement, and reductions in school leaving. What the program offers young people is regular, informal discussion groups on life issues lead by a trained facilitator and opportunities for community service. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program in Los Angeles stresses the importance of modifying beliefs and acquiring life, social and personal skills. As a result, a group of students who took DARE in sixth grade compared with nonparticipants one year later showed less total use of substances since sixth grade.

Finally, there is not only a research base but a base of practical knowledge that suggests enormous opportunities to broaden the assumptions that we -- practitioners, parents, policymakers -- develop young people; that youth development is the array of programs and institutions that we offer our youth. Youth development is not a program. Youth development, first and foremost, is the ongoing process in which all young people are engaged in meeting their physical, personal and social needs and in building a set of skills and competencies that seem useful in their present lives and in the future. All young people are engaged in their own development -- those in gangs, those in college, those involved in multiple youth programs, and

those in none. The value of engaging young people in the design, implementation and assessment of their own learning has been strongly documented in the education research literature.

Youth development goes on whether or not adults offer supports. It is precisely because of this that adults have a responsibility to offer supports, opportunities and services that help young people find socially positive and constructive ways to meet their needs and to develop and use a broad array of competencies. Increasingly, gang membership is being analyzed and understood in this context. Without romanticizing their members or condoning their actions, it must be acknowledged that gangs do meet needs, and offer opportunities to members to build competencies. Membership is often the only way to ensure safety. Once a member, gangs provide structure, strong social relationships, including older youth mentors, opportunities to contribute, and independence. Gangs, moreover, teach skills and reward competence. The growth of gangs indicates that young people, even those who are most disconnected from mainstream society, seek ways to meet their needs and gain skills and sense of mastery.

Parents, teachers, administrators, and young people all understand the connection between the competencies and the needs, and all understand the important role that schools can play:

- A 1987 study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company found that a majority of the more than 1,000 teachers interviewed cited isolation and lack of supervision as major reasons that children have difficulty in school.

- A study of 865 10- to 15 year olds in Madison, Wisconsin found that young adolescents without after-school activities were more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in undesirable behavior than children with after-school activities.

- Nearly four out of 10 teens polled in a 1988 survey sponsored by the American Home Economics Association felt that schools, at best do only an adequate job of teaching the life skills necessary for responsible and productive adult life.

- High school seniors surveyed in a Minnesota youth poll in 1983 indicated that social and personal skills were some of the most important things they learned in school.

Moreover, empirical research from a variety of disciplines, documents the connection between meeting needs, developing competencies, and reducing problem behaviors:

- Two-thirds of the young people surveyed in youth participation programs in Israel and the United States reported that they learned more or much more in their community experiences than in their average class in school. Additionally, participants showed greater increases in problem-solving skills, in their levels of personal and social responsibility, and in their attitudes toward people different from themselves than did non-participants.

- Among sixth through twelfth graders who are in single-parent families or families with a history of abuse or parental addiction, those who participated in religious organizations, school extracurricular activities or community clubs and organizations were significantly less likely to exhibit "at risk" behaviors than those who did not. For example, 42 percent of the youth who reported no at-risk behaviors were involved in community clubs and organizations compared to only 29 percent of those who reported five or more at-risk behaviors.

The Need for Policy Leadership: Charting a New Course for Vision Setting, Assessment and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Applying the youth development framework has many implications for schools. It suggests that many of the directions in educational reform across the areas of school governance, structure and organization instructional practices and community partnerships must be endorsed and expanded. Prevention programs such as the ones described earlier, are in schools across the country. They are not, however, part of the institutional fabric of schools. They come and go with funding and fads. They are allowed to quietly co-exist next to institutionalized practices that run counter to their own (e.g., students are not encouraged, or actively discouraged from making important choices, exercising leadership in the classroom but are actively encouraged to do so in the "program.")

Equally important, community organizations that support youth development -- youth orchestras, recreation and sports organizations, community youth centers (public and private), camps, Saturday academies, religious organizations -- are underutilized. They are a key piece of the institutional puzzle that must be put together to build supportive communities. They complement schools not only in services and activities, but also in structure and function. Young people attend voluntarily, they have more freedom to choose activities and to progress

at their own pace, the emphasis is not on competition but individual and group achievement, they can attach to the organization (and to the people within them) for longer periods of time and in more complex ways.

Critical to the complete transformation of schools into youth development organizations is the adequate valuation and assessment of structural and pedagogic and curriculum changes being recommended and implemented. For example, if teamwork and leadership skills are seen as legitimate and important educational outcomes, then cooperative learning would be valued. It would be difficult to argue against some form of it being used as a base for the organization of classrooms and students.

There are many examples of innovation and good practice going on in schools. What I think we have observed, however, is that, without a fundamental shift in the way innovation and practice are assessed, lasting institutional structures and policies that support overall youth development will not be created.

Building on the strong momentum begun with this wave of educational reform, educational policymakers can, and I think should, seize the opportunity to forge real collaborative partnerships with the other institutions and organizations engaged in youth development, those in what I have called the fourth sector -- socialization and development. (Schools and employment training organizations focus on credentialling, health and social service organizations focus on treatment, police and justice organizations focus on control). While the resource base is obviously in the schools' favor, the conceptual work and programmatic experience is not. Schools need to talk seriously with the socialization and development organizations that offer programs within the school walls and in the communities in which they sit.

The charge is difficult because the task is not just to find ways to collaborate on service delivery. The charge, again, is to develop a common vision, shared assessments of supports, and a common accountability system. If accepted, schools will engage simultaneously in a process of collaboration building and program redefinition. They will change both because they are forging new service partnerships to enhance youth development and because their partners are helping them shape and institutionalize programs and practices that address this goal.
State education policymakers will be critical to the successful completion of these tasks:

- They will have to articulate urgency, vision and direction.
- They will have to offer rewards and incentives, and technical assistance as schools assess their impact as youth development organizations.
- They will have to establish clear indicators of system and student progress that reflect the broadened lines of accountability.

Stated succinctly, youth development is an ongoing, interrelated process of meeting needs and developing and using competencies. If we want to assess the extent to which an organization is contributing to youth development, we have to assess not the content of its programming, but the environment it creates for young people and the extent to which it actively relates to and contributes to the larger environment in which youth function. Given this statement schools need to be assessed on three fronts:

1. The extent to which the school functions as a healthy community that is supportive of youth development.
2. The extent to which the school functions as a youth development organization in the community in which it exists.
3. The extent to which the community functions in and relates to the school.

This assessment will require some very different tools and measures. Take for example, the first goal. In order to function as a healthy community, schools must demonstrate that, at a minimum, they are doing no harm in each of the five competency areas and each of the seven needs areas. Ideally, as one of the central youth development organizations in a child's life, they should go well beyond this baseline.

Take vocational competence -- preparation for the workforce. Schools, as communities, should see themselves as employers. Every student in the school should have an important and meaningful job. Every student should be developing specific skills and experiences that can be added to his or her resume. Every student should be given performance reviews and recommendations. Obviously, every student's job is to be a student. Meeting the above criteria even in this narrow definition of "job" requires implementing many of the changes in teaching, testing, grading, and sorting being recommended by reform experts.

But let us go beyond this. Aren't there other jobs in the school community? How are they delegated? How are they rewarded? Too often, the other jobs -- hall monitor, newspaper editor, student council member, patrol, line leader -- are given out as rewards to those who excel, or at a minimum behave, in class. Is this the best use of these jobs? Is this practice supportive of youth development? Tracking systems could easily be put in place that assess schools' (and, within schools, classrooms) success at developing jobs that students value, developing job descriptions that reflect job-specific employment criteria, and at opening up the application process to the full student body. Student success could be measured not just in academic performance but in connection and contribution to the school community.

This task could be carried through in the second goal. Students could be given recognition for the "jobs" that they hold in the larger community. Schools could be more actively connected to organizations wanting volunteers or part-time paid staff, could place more emphasis on getting students to assess the learning that happens on the job, and could give credit for out-of-school experiences.

This type of thinking can be done for each competency area and each need area. We do not need to have definitive criteria and indicators to get the process underway. The challenge is to begin the shift in thinking needed.

Conclusion

The most well-developed, best funded, best monitored institutions that youth interact with are schools. We have debated for decades why/how we have ended up with institutions that are, far too often, constraining and even hostile environments for young people. The answer is simple. Rhetoric and good intentions aside, institutions are driven by their accountability systems. Schools are held accountable for attendance, matriculation, and achievement. Schools are not held accountable for their environments (beyond, perhaps, the assurance of basic physical safety). Schools are not held accountable for the development of competencies beyond academic skills. As much as the sentiment is there to alter the environment and broaden the definition of education, the institution will not change until the bottom-line definitions of accountability change.

Schools are, as they should be, in the education business. As long as the broader goals and strategies of youth development are seen as secondary unless they can be integrally and unequivocally connected to academic achievement, they will not be vigorously embraced. Similarly, as long as the underlying goals of much of the programming going on in schools that is supportive of these broader goals is couched in problem prevention language, it will not be institutionalized.

Opportunities for participation in music, sports, arts, drama; chances to play meaningful leadership roles within the classroom and the larger school community; activities that bring students together as equals across racial, ethnic, class, gender and achievement lines; solid skill-building in problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, family communication; opportunities to build lasting friendships and to contribute; multiple avenues for engaging ir discussion with and seeking guidance from adults -- these are things that students consistently say are important to them. Yet these are the types of programs, activities, and supports that are consistently cut from education budgets in hard times because they are seen as secondary to the educational mission. There is a more than ample research base that suggests that these activities and supports are central to the educational mission. The challenge is to build and articulate the vision that places them at the center and to find and value the partners that will help keep them there.

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